

## **BACKGROUND PAPER**

**SUBJECT:** Joint Close Air Support (JCAS) Joint Test Force (JTF)

**PROGRAM SPONSOR:** Developmental Test and Evaluation, S&TS, OUSD(AT&L)

**BACKGROUND:** The commander of the United States Air Force Air Warfare Center, Nellis AFB NV originally nominated JCAS as a Fiscal Year 1996 Joint Feasibility Study (JFS), titled Joint Night CAS (JNCAS). The JNCAS JFS was conducted from 1 October 1996 through the charter decision in August 1997. JNCAS was chartered on 14 August 1997 to employ multi-service equipment and personnel to conduct a JT&E to investigate, evaluate, and improve the operational effectiveness of joint U.S. night Close Air Support (CAS). JNCAS was to evaluate the night CAS mission effectiveness of U. S. forces in a realistic joint military operations environment and identify/verify potential mission area enhancements. The JT&E charter subsequently expanded to include day CAS, and the name changed to JCAS. Col David Brown became the Joint Test Director with the retirement of Col Steve Boudreaux in March 2000.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the JCAS JT&E is to provide the Services with an evaluation of the baseline effectiveness of joint CAS and to examine the potential for improvement to joint CAS in the areas of Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (JTTP), systems capabilities, and training. The baseline effectiveness of JCAS will inform the Service CINCs of their current CAS capability. The study of potential improvements will provide the Services with a validated database to make informed decisions on future JTTP, equipment/systems, and training.

**PROGRAM ORGANIZATION:** The Air Force-led JTF is located at Eglin AFB FL and also has permanently assigned personnel located at the National Training Center (NTC) at Ft Irwin CA, and Air Warrior at Nellis AFB NV. The JTF is composed of 19 military personnel, including Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps deputies, and 30 government and civilian contractor personnel. Collectively, the JTF has extensive operational experience in all phases of CAS as well as test and evaluation experience.

**TEST APPROACH:** The JCAS JTF will accomplish its charter through analysis of data collected in conjunction with Joint and Service training exercises and surveys of CAS operational personnel and subject matter experts (SMEs), development of enhancements to the CAS process, and test of the enhancements in realistic exercise environments. Testing will occur at NTC, Air Warrior, the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms CA, and other appropriate venues.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** The JTF has coordinated a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with several agencies supporting the JT&E. These included NTC and the 57<sup>th</sup> Wing, Nellis AFB, sites for JT&E data collection. MOAs with the All Service Combat Identification Evaluation Team (ASCIET) and the 99<sup>th</sup> Range Group provided instrumentation support. An additional MOA, coordinated with the 25 ASOS and 15 ABW, provided test participant support at NTC. An MOA for testing at Twentynine Palms is in the final stages. Testing began in November 1998 with the conduct of the first mini test at NTC. In April 2000, the JTF completed data collection for a year's worth of field testing at NTC with an emphasis on the joint CAS baseline. In May and

June, the test team collected demographic information and opinions from over 1300 respondents from operational units on the current state of joint CAS training and equipment via surveys on the JCAS web site, the first time a JT&E used such an internet survey on such a large scale to support its test. In July, the JTF hosted a JCAS SME Seminar to present interim findings and get direct feedback from the operational CAS community. Another major effort was preparation of extensive recommended changes for the next Joint Pub 3-09.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Close Air Support (CAS)*.

**PLANNED ACTIVITIES:** The JCAS Interim Report, to be published early in FY01, will be inclusive of all findings to date...results of all day CAS field test data, mini test results, survey information collected from operational respondents via the JCAS web site, and information gathered from CAS SMEs and CAS-related seminars/symposiums. The JTF will present the results as soon as possible to the doctrine centers, MAJCOMS, Joint Staff, CINCs, and the JROC. The JTF will expand our scope of testing to venues other than NTC, the first being the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. A major focus for FY01 data collection will be on night CAS.

**LEGACY PRODUCTS:** The principal legacy products offered by the JCAS JT&E include:

- ***Range instrumentation system improvements.*** The JTF identified buffering problem time delays from the movement of instrumented vehicles/personnel that precluded accurate Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) on a real-time basis at NTC. JCAS then made improvements to allow for real-time BDA.
- ***Development of improved Joint CAS mission checklists.*** The JCAS JTF developed comprehensive operator checklists for Joint CAS planning, preparation, and execution.
- ***Successful demonstration of ability to conduct simultaneous testing and training.*** Conducting testing and training at a location like NTC allows for multiple collection opportunities over a period of time and avoids reliance on a single test event.
- ***Joint CAS baseline.*** The JCAS JTF will leave behind a large database of the current capability for the development of new doctrine, new TTPs, support for acquisition programs, and to give CINCs a better understanding of current combat capability.
- ***Improved understanding of the CAS process.*** The Joint CAS mission area has already enjoyed increased awareness at the flag level for all services.
- ***Exercise and test enhancements.*** The JCAS JTF has demonstrated the ability to merge data for display on a single executable program for the rotational training unit as a takeaway product from their activities at NTC.
- ***Joint training recommendations.*** Studying and evaluating the current joint CAS process will highlight shortfalls in current joint training.

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